



Hello Everyone!

Welcome back to our Elementary Lit Writing class. We are excited to have you!

We will begin the class promptly at the top of the hour. Meanwhile, you can check your microphone and speakers by going to the “Audio” section of your control panel and adjusting its settings.



Some Basic Instructions to review before we get started!

GoToWebinar

Use the same procedures that you use to join our book discussions.

ShareFile

Again, the procedures are the same as for our book discussions, EXCEPT you have access to two (2) additional folders as a writing student:

1. The writing class recordings folder
2. Your own personal assignments folder – into which you can UPLOAD your assignments

Assignments:

1. Due dates: Mondays before midnight
2. Format: WORD
3. Length: Depends on the assignment, but never more than one paragraph.
4. Heading: See following page

Welcome back, Lit Lovers!

Happy New Year to all of you!

It feels like ages since we last met for this Elementary Writing class, don't you think? I don't know about you, but I feel as if all the Christmas goodies and games and family holidays have almost erased from my mind all those conversations we've been having about strong sentences, illustrative examples, and the power of active verbs...

Assuming that you readers and writers out there have had a wonderful, restful Christmas break, I'd be willing to bet that your heads are a little fuzzy when it comes to grammar and English right now.

In today's class, I want to sweep away some of the dust and cobwebs in your minds and draw you back into the world of careful reading and thoughtful writing. In that spirit, I want to review a couple of things.

In our last class before Christmas, we were discussing Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In particular, we were practicing the use of descriptive language to make our sentences vibrant and interesting. We talked about a few different methods of description...

Can anyone remind me of some devices we use to make our sentences (or our paragraphs) come to life?



1. Simile- a comparison of two things that are not like each other, using like or as
2. Metaphor- (just like a simile) EXCEPT does NOT use like or as.
3. Adjectives and Adverbs

Example of Metaphor- The mud-puddle is a bowl of chocolate.

Example of Simile- The mud is liquid, like a bowl of chocolate.

Now all of you are improving dramatically with your descriptive language etc. BUT these skills aren't helpful to us in the arguing of a point in a literary essay until we learn *where* to use them...

I want to turn our attention back to the fundamentals of the paragraph to put these skills/tools that we've been practicing into their appropriate context.

A good strong paragraph should be organized like a tootsie roll...

TOPIC SENTENCE (THESIS)

SUPPORTING SENTENCES (3-4)

CLINCHER SENTENCE (Restatement of the Thesis)



Now who can tell me what the purpose of the Topic Sentence is?

Your argument/answer to the writing prompt.

A Topic Sentence is the single sentence answer to the writing prompt. (Your argument in its most basic form) which introduces the subject of your conversation and sets the stage for the rest of the paragraph/paper etc.

What are the most important elements of a good topic sentence? We discussed these in great detail way back at the beginning of the school year...

1) A complete thought (both a subject and a verb). A sentence without a subject or a verb is called a fragment.

2) Direct and full answer to the writing prompt.

3) **STRONG**: active verbs (NOT the verb of being), pithy content (communicate just what you mean in as few words as possible), adjectives and adverbs.

How about the supporting sentences? What are their duties in the service of the paragraph?

- An example of the point made in the topic sentence.

(They are illustrations/concrete examples/proofs of the point you made in your topic sentence...the legs your argument has to stand on.)

So what should we strive for in the creation of supporting sentences? Remember the analogy? Supports are like climbing stairs...

At the top of a particularly long flight, I am **SORE**

What does SORE stand for? Do you remember?

Specific- references to the story

Orderly- smooth transitions between thoughts/characters. Chronology.

Relevant- tied together with both the other supporting sentences AND the topic sentence

Efficient- Using few words to say what you mean. Not TEN when FIVE will do.

And lastly, we have the Clincher Sentence which we've only discussed very briefly so far.

The Clincher Sentence is a restatement or reminder of the Topic Sentence. In the clincher, you have a chance to remind your reader that all the proofs or supports which you have laid out in your supporting sentences really do support or prove your thesis...More about that later.

Now all of this looks pretty overwhelming when you think about tackling it all at once. I want to give you a chance to build a paragraph from scratch once more, practicing each of these elements one at a time.

Assignment 14:

Write me a strong topic sentence in answer to this prompt: “Is Charlie changed by the events of this story? What effect do his adventures in the Chocolate Factory have on his character?”

Assuming that we all agree that Charlie is the protagonist of the story, focus on whether or not he undergoes change throughout the story...If so, what causes this change in him? If not, why not?

Remember the elements of a good Topic Sentence. Refer to these class notes for reminders if necessary.

If you have questions, please send me an email at m.andrews@centerforlit.com and I will be happy to help!

Happy writing! ☺

Reminders:

Section B Discussion of *Miracles on Maple Hill*- January 17th

Section A Discussion of *Straw Into Gold*- January 31st



